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FOR INFORMATION

STATEMENT BY LA LECHE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL

1. La Leche League International is committed to supporting international efforts that achieve the breast-feeding goals stated in the Innocenti Declaration, the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and the World Declaration and Plan for Action of the International Conference on Nutrition.

2. In the name of mother-to-mother support for breast-feeding, La Leche League International presents its 1993 statement to the UNICEF Executive Board. The League recommends to the UNICEF Executive Board that:

(a) UNICEF endorse mother-to-mother support (MTMS) as a valid and valuable intervention towards meeting international breast-feeding goals and that UNICEF encourage non-governmental organizations and Governments also to recognize this key intervention;

(b) UNICEF encourage national breast-feeding commissions to include representatives of local MTMS as members of their commissions;

(c) UNICEF endorse and fund MTMS representation in national and international seminars and conferences that address maternal/child issues;

(d) UNICEF encourage health care systems to collaborate with MTMS organizations, especially in relation to the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. MTMS members should be included in hospital assessment, master assessor training workshops, development and implementation of health care providers' training and in the development of the "10 steps to successful breastfeeding" as listed in Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding;

(e) UNICEF contribute financially to MTMS in the development of materials; the planning and execution of training sessions, workshops and conferences; and in organizational management. We encourage UNICEF to facilitate the means whereby MTMS meet, network and strengthen each other.

3. The above recommendations are based on the following points:

(a) MTMS as a means to promote, protect and provide emotional and technical assistance on breast-feeding is a valid and worthwhile intervention and has been demonstrated as an effective intervention in increasing the rates of exclusive breast-feeding and breast-feeding duration;

(b) Women's support networks that incorporate positive and correct breast-feeding information should be protected and preserved, but should be monitored against the entrance of negative or incorrect breast-feeding information;

(c) MTMS provide immediate and sustained support outside the formal health care structure. A collaborative relationship between a health system that supports breast-feeding and an active MTMS community network is an important component in the promotion and support of breast-feeding;

(d) The grass-roots approach of MTMS and the active participation by mothers in the sharing of experiences contribute to increasing the awareness of breast-feeding as an important community issue. The needs of breast-feeding mothers are accurately assessed through this approach;

(e) MTMS educates and empowers women, thereby contributing to the accomplishment of international breast-feeding goals.